



I Remember The Italian Campaign

“Dear Mom” Letter

January 1, 1944

Dear Mom,

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. I have been thinking about you, dad, my brother and sister a lot.

As I am writing here during the **Italian** Campaign, I can still hear the sounds of the **bombs** and the guns firing.

Did you receive the letter I wrote in August, describing my experiences in the invasion of Sicily? It was quite something mom, the **invasion** began in the early morning last July 10, 1943. Our Canadian troops and the British troops went ashore near **Pachino**. In total the invasion included 3,000 ships and air landing craft from the **Allied Forces**. The effort was codenamed “**Operation Husky**”. The fighting lasted more than four weeks and almost 600 Canadians sadly died.

We spent Christmas Day fighting in Italy in what was called the Battle of **Ortona**. It was quite a difficult battle due to the fact that Ortona was an old **mediaeval** town of castles and stone buildings and was located on a ledge overlooking the **Adriatic Sea**. It was very difficult to use any tanks or artillery, and this resulted in vicious street fighting where we Canadians smashed our way through walls and buildings (“**mouseholing**” as we called it). However, our struggle was successful, and we eventually **captured** the town on December 28, 1943 after seven days of struggle.

I have found it difficult to sleep since that battle. I keep remembering the faces of the German soldiers (the **Axis Powers**) that we were fighting against. Many of those men were about my age, about 18 or so. Fighting them gave me an awful feeling. They, like me would also have homes, with families waiting for them - maybe even children. This made me sad, especially on Christmas day, and it really made me miss my girlfriend Susan - have you seen her lately? Please send my love to her.

Sometimes I wonder how I make it through the days. I have good **friends** here though, and we have built up strong relationships. When I was **injured**, in Sicily, it was my friends who helped me through.

Serving in the Second World **War** has been a real difficult experience for me, and one that I will never forget. However, I know on the more positive side, that at least we are making progress to protect human rights, to stop some countries from bullying others and to fight for **freedom** and **peace**. I heard that one of the fellas from our home town is to receive the **Victoria Cross** - that is wonderful news, he had a lot of **courage**. The town must be very proud.

I hope to be home soon.

Love, your son,
George